Management headed by the Deputy Prime Minister has been constituted for policy decisions to deal with the current drought in many States.

(b) and (c) The decisions taken by the Task Force include allocation of foodgrains free of cost for relief employment, relaxations in the guidelines for allocations under normal component of Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) scheme, financial support for running cattle camps and free transportation of water and fodder by the Railways. Major decisions of the Task Force have already been implemented.

Effect of cold and foggy spell on Rabi crop

340. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:
SHRI DATTA MEGHE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prolonged cold and foggy spell in the Northern parts of the country has hit the standing crops, jeopardizing the prospects of a bumper rabi harvest;

(b) if so, the estimated loss to rabi crops;

(c) the measures adopted/proposed to be adopted to protect crops against the inclement weather;

(d) whether Government have formulated any scheme to provide financial assistance particularly to marginal and poor peasants whose crops have been damaged; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The prolonged cold spell had some adverse impact on rabi crops. However, in order to minimize the damage to crops on account of frost, farmers were advised to go for additional irrigation. The rains in the last week of January, 2003 were timely and had a favourable impact on the rabi crops. However, the production of rabi crops this year is likely to be less than last year due to the moisture stress experienced during the monsoon and post monsoon seasons in many States. According to the second advance estimates of agricultural production, the production of rabi foodgrains in 2002-03 is

likely to be 92.91 million tonnes, which is 7.56 million tonnes or 7.5% less than last year's rabi production. The rabi oilseeds production is expected to be 6.99 million tonnes, which is 0.58 million tonnes or 7.7% lower than last year.

(c) to (e) In order to provide protection to farmers in the event of damage to crops due to natural calamities, the Government have introduced National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) from Rabi 1999-2000 season. The NAIS, *inter-alia,* provides for premium subsidy to small and marginal farmers. In order to compensate the farmers for the increase in input costs, the Government announced special drought relief ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 per quintal for the rabi crops of 2002-03 season.

Improving Fish Production

341. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the catch of fish has declined in the Indian seas;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(c) whether Government have any plan to improve fish production, if so, the details thereof for the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The marine fish production declined in 2000-01 over 1999-2000 mainly due to low rainfall during monsoon in Gujarat and fluctuations in climatic conditions in Kerala.

Marine fish production

(Lakh Metric Tonnes)

1999-2000	28.52
2000-2001	28.10
2001-2002	28.30

(c) The following major steps have been taken by the State Governments of Kerala and Gujarat to augment fish production: